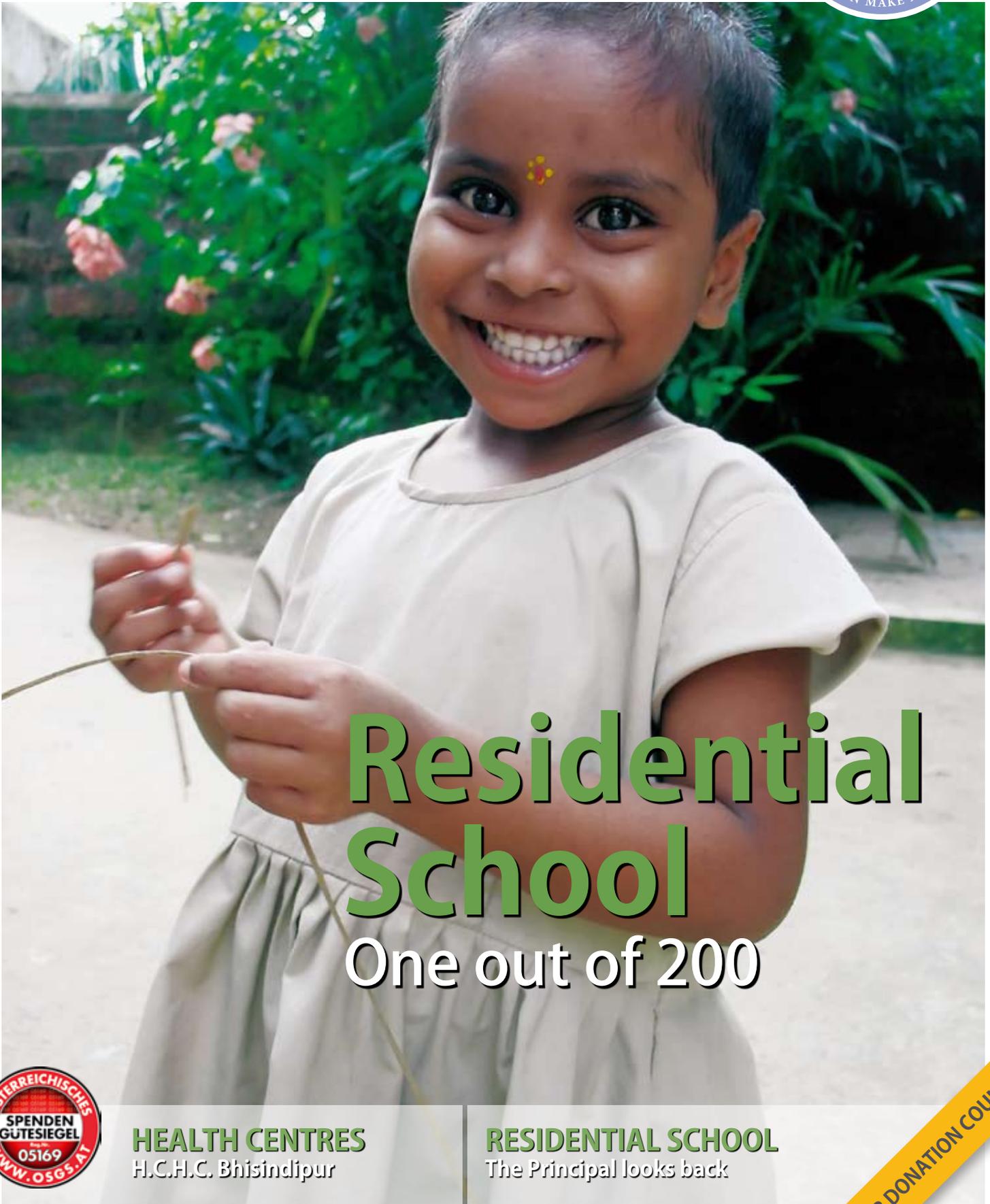


# SPOTLIGHT



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## Residential School

One out of 200



**HEALTH CENTRES**  
H.C.H.C. Bhisindipur

**RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL**  
The Principal looks back

YOUR DONATION COUNTS!



Mrs Steber-Martin and her husband in front of the 'Support Balashram School' bus



The flamboyant Balashram design attracts attention wherever it goes

## A bus for the children

In September 2007, Mrs Silke Steber-Martin found herself listening to a talk on Hand in Hand in Baisweil (Bavaria-Germany). She never expected to feel so moved.

By Heiko Mueller

She knew, there and then, that she had to find a way of alleviating the misery and hardship of many helpless people in India and her profound sense of justice fuelled her to take action.

"If those who have abundance in their lives would give something to those who own nothing, then all individuals would be better off – and not only those who receive, but even those who give!" reflects Mrs Steber-Martin on her commitment.



### Everybody can help

Of all the projects, the one she felt closest to was Balashram School. All 200 boys and girls who are now living at Balashram had previously been exposed to all sorts of unacceptable conditions: malnutrition, illiteracy, polluted drinking water and infectious disease. Sadly, many poor children in India live in the shadow of an economic boom.

"Many in the West save money which will never be used, while many people urgently need it. Obviously there are people who are not in the position to donate money, however anybody can get involved and help in other ways," reckons the friendly South German.

Silke Steber-Martin's husband has a bus business and she herself is a designer. Together they decorated one of the buses from the fleet with **Hand in Hand** banners

and motifs. The reaction from the public was instant! The bus was unmissable and they were approached by curious and interested people wherever they went. They had achieved their goal of attracting as much attention as possible about the Balashram project. Even the local press ran a story on the bus, its founder and her mission.

Shortly afterwards, Mrs Steber-Martin organized a "Himalayan Evening," which culminated in a slide presentation given by a friend who had travelled to India. The proceeds of this successful event were donated to **Hand in Hand** as were those raised by her next charity event – a concert given by the famous singer and songwriter, Sigi Aldenhoff.

### A good cause

Even within her own social circle, this persistent and dynamic lady from Allgäu campaigns for **Hand in Hand** projects. With an infectious enthusiasm, she inspires her friends and colleagues to organize flea markets or to collect money for **Hand in Hand** during company parties.

A good friend of hers recently gave a Powerpoint presentation on Balashram at a Montessori School.

"I'm always surprised about the synergy effect which is created as soon as one vouches for a good cause," says Mrs Steber-Martin.

Maybe, right now, her brightly coloured bus is travelling across the German countryside, spreading the message of **Hand in Hand** and inspiring others, like herself, to make a difference in their own very unique way. <

The local press reports on Silke Steber-Martin



The Board and some staff members of Hand in Hand during a meeting (September 2008)



## Dear Friends!

We are often asked if donations to **Hand in Hand** actually reach those in need or whether, like other charities, a large proportion is swallowed up by administration costs. We are happy to report that during the financial year 2007/2008 we were able to donate 189.000,- € to the projects in India. The administration costs amounted to 7.83%, which is a fraction of what other charitable organizations spend. One reason why our expenditure is so low is that all of our activities are performed by people on a **voluntary basis**. Your donations therefore go, almost entirely, to those who desperately need each and every Euro.

### In this issue you will find some examples of how your donations have been used.

- The medical treatment of a seriously ill woman and several children has been financed (page 6)
- A new class of 40 boys and girls were admitted to our Residential School where, at present, 200 children are living (page 4)
- At the Bhisindipur Health Centre in West Bengal, the poorest of the poor are treated with homeopathic medicine free of charge (page 7)

One again this year we were awarded the Austrian Donation certificate, which guarantees the lawful, legitimate and appropriate use of donations. Please continue to give your help so that many people in need can live a dignified life.

On behalf of **Hand in Hand**

Peter van Breukelen  
(President)

PS: Hope you like Spotlight's new look!



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## NEWS



Dedicated supporters of our projects

### One, two, many flea markets for Hand in Hand

During the past months, many of our supporters have organized, in Austria and abroad, flea markets in aid of **Hand in Hand**. At this point we would like to say "Thank you" for such dedication and involvement!



Arts friends at the HiH stand at Museumszentrum Mistelbach

### Big Art Auction for people in need

**Hand in Hand** was one of the 23 aid organizations invited to participate and benefit from the much-attended auction of paintings and sculptures by famous Austrian artists. Special guest of this event was Hermann Nitsch.

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# NEWS FROM BALASHRAM

## “We are the new ones!”

In April of this year, in time for the beginning of the academic year 2008/2009, another 40 boys and girls aged 3 to 4 were accepted into the Nursery class of Balashram Residential School. Like the other 160 children, they also come from extremely poor families. The selection of these children took weeks of touring by the school committee, within the poorest areas of Orissa.

by Marie-Pierre Zerr, Project coordination



The families live in simple huts like these

Because of social pressure to have a male child, many of these families increase, but, consequently, the parents do not have the means to provide for the high number of children. There are very few jobs in the area and only some families have a small piece of land, which provides them with the means to live. Sometimes the fathers have the chance to work as day labourers on the roads or in the housing construction sector, but often this is far away from home. Popular jobs for women are the rolling of cigarettes or the transportati-



Smile! The new Nursery Class tries to sit still for a photo

on of stones and sand. Most of the new children in the Nursery class are used to receiving only two, not very nourishing, meals per day. In most cases the living conditions are cramped and unhygienic. Many families are living in a few square metres, in either clay huts or huts made simply with leaves. These conditions lead many children to suffer from diseases such as typhus. Many fathers and mothers die prematurely due to alcohol or drug abuse and from diseases such as malaria.

The State has recognized Balashram Residential School, which is supported by **Hand in Hand**, for taking care of the life and future of such needy children, since 2004. Since then, five classes have been created: Nursery, Kindergarten and three Standard Classes I, II and III. With the addition of the new Nursery class the total number of children who are receiving the best possible education in our school has now reached 200 boys and girls. <

### RETROSPECTION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS



As usual, the children completed the three final tests at the close of the academic year. Overall, the results were good. However, those children who, this time, did not obtain such favourable results were given extra private tuition. All of the children are supported and encouraged! For the current academic year 2008/2009 more basic computer courses and excursions are on offer while the popular subjects such as dance and music or drawing and painting are high up on the timetable. In addition more time is given to sports (football, cricket) and play (chess, parlour games). In this way the body, intellect and spirit of the Balashram children can be developed simultaneously.

! By sponsoring a class for 35 €, you can guarantee the future of our school project!

### CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



The work on the **school building** is in an advanced phase. The external walls are to be painted shortly, and the inside walls will follow.

The plastering of the external walls of the **girls' quarters** is almost finished and the same work will be done to the walls surrounding the courtyard. The first floor is ready for occupancy while the work on the second floor is underway.

In the **boys' quarters** the ceiling on the ground floor is finished and the ceiling boarding has been mounted on the first floor.

The first **Personnel building** is ready and three more are under construction.



1

1 Principal Sudha Bathina and a class of Balashram School



2



3

2 : During an excursion at Konark 3 Self-confident and fearless: Balashram Students during a performance

## From Chicago to Arua

When Sudha Bathina, a natural scientist of Indian origin living in the USA, retired from her job as assistant professor at the University of Chicago, little did she know that she would temporarily renounce her pensioner's life for a special job in her homeland. From August 2007 until March 2008 she directed the activities of Balashram Residential School as acting Principal.

by Sudha Bathina, Chicago (USA)

**M**y life took a turn on August 8th 2007, when I found myself as the acting Principal of Balashram. I was in India with my husband and I spent a few days at the school at the beginning of June, just to be there and watch the daily activities of the children and staff. I was really impressed with the children's willingness to learn and also their loving nature. It so happened at that time, the former Principal left after a short stay and the school was left with new staff who had just been hired, without a Principal and proper direction. That was how my husband and I agreed to offer my services.

### Fearless and self-confident

What I thought would be for a short time turned out to be a whole academic year but I enjoyed every day of it! It was very rewarding. To see a child smile with trust and love, and yet have no expectation was a great experience. With the older children I was inspired by their love, willingness to learn and enthusiasm to perform to the best of their ability.

This is what has produced such good singers, dancers, artists and instrumentalists at a tender age, all of whom have amazed the audiences with their public performances. Another notable feature about these children is that they are completely fearless when it comes to performing and that confidence comes again from their trust. None of them have the so-called, 'stage fright' which children even

from secure homes often experience.

Interacting with the younger ones is even harder to describe. They would look at you with a shy smile. Occasionally some would venture to come closer and touch you or lean against you and feel really happy. Not to get attached to these children and trying to remain impartial was itself a great lesson.

### Be a part of it

Not that it was problem free. With 162 children to care for, a child falling sick, having to be rushed to hospital for surgery or having frequent malaria attacks was not uncommon. Similarly chicken pox, measles and other childhood diseases were all part of the course and no problem remained unsolved.

Visitors from home and abroad often wonder how all this is accomplished. We may not have all the answers but I can surely say it was an amazing opportunity to be a part of it all. We can all help in anyway we can. It is not possible for all of us to physically stay at Balashram and help, but there are opportunities for sponsoring the children. Non profit charitable organizations are helping like **Hand in Hand** Europe and USA, to name a few, and to which donations can be made.

I am indeed happy and grateful for the opportunity and hope that all of you can share some of that happiness by participating in this noble cause. <



The little ones are looking for closeness and kindness

## HEALTH PROJECTS

# Hope in time of need

Every year, over 10,000 people in need are given treatment and medicine, free of charge at one of our four Health Centres. Although the Health Centres provide a vital out-patient service, they do not have the facilities to provide in-patient care, particularly for those suffering with severe illness or life-threatening disease.

By Heiko Müller



Abdul during bone surgery

**O**ur partner organization **Prajnana Mission** often helps such patients to be admitted into hospitals in order to receive the appropriate medical care. Thus, **Hand in Hand** has agreed to cover the medical costs of five people who come from remote villages in Orissa.

### Success stories

Four year old **Japani Jena** and five year old **Barsarani Sahoo** were born without an anus. Before coming to see us, Japani had been treated medically, but very unprofessionally, to the extent that his life was in danger. Now both children have undergone surgery and are receiving post-operative treatment. For Japani a

Little Japani during admission into hospital

second operation will be necessary.

Thirty five year old **Kuntala Swain** is suffering from breast cancer at an advanced stage. After four cycles of chemotherapy, the cancer specialists in Cuttack decided to operate on her in July and all went well. Mrs. Swain has recovered and is now undergoing further chemotherapy. **Abdul Malik Khan** is a sixteen year old boy affected by severe chronic infection of the bone (Osteomyelitis). He underwent successful surgery in June and, at present, is on antibiotics.

Six year old **Mangaraj Rout** lost his left foot during an accident. For years, the lesion had been barely treated but now **Hand in Hand** and **Prajnana Mission** will take on his case and look after him.

These people can now look confidently to the – future thanks to your donations. **Please continue to support us, so that we can bring help, to where it is most needed!** <

## Ratha Yatra in Puri

Once again this year, from 4 – 12th July 2008, Balighai Health Centre organized a Medical Camp in Puri during the world-famous religious celebration, "Ratha Yatra".

By Annemarie Ackerl

**T**he Festival of Chariots attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and tourists from all over the world. The crowds line the mile-long boulevard of Puri to witness an outpouring of devotion amidst a spectacle of colour.

The Medical Camp Team set-up a tent near the procession where sick or exhausted pilgrims could be attended to. Outside the tent drinking water was distributed – also an ambulance was available for emergency cases. Helpers of **Prajnana Mission** sprayed water from containers onto spectators to cool them down as they waited in the heat to see or touch the colossal statues. The three statues of Indian deities including Lord Jagannath, are pulled forward on three enormous, decorated chariots. One thousand people are needed to get just one of



Ratha Yatra – a spectacle of colour

these wooden chariots moving. It is said to be auspicious for those who help pull the thick and heavy ropes that move them forward.

With such a huge crowd the danger of getting hurt or even killed is high. Altogether more than **one million visitors** took part in this unique festival this year and **270** of them were treated at the Medical Camp. <



During the Medical Camp at Puri

# HEALTH PROJECTS



1



2



3

1 Doctors and assistants prepare for the first patients 2 Blood donation camps are often held at Bhisindipur Health Centre 3 The homeopathic pharmacy

## H.C.H.C. Bhisindipur

In India, homeopathy is considered the foundation pillar of all forms of treatment, alongside ayurvedic and allopathic medicine.

By Dr. Bodhan Maity

I am Dr. Bodhan Maity, Consultant Physician at H.C.H.C.\* Bhisindipur. This charitable Health Centre was inaugurated in 2004 and is situated in a remote village in the district of Medinipur, West Bengal. From my experience at this Health Centre, I have observed that most of the patients suffer from poverty and malnutrition. They cannot afford adequate food and clothing, nevermind the expense of seeing a medical professional such as a pathologist or radiologist. Patients get free medical treatment and medicine here and we also arrange blood donation camps with the assistance of Medinipur Medical College and Hospital.

### Similia similibus currentur

Our Health Centre treats all patients homeopathically. The homeopathic approach is holistic as well as individualistic. It is holistic in the sense that medicine is selected for the patient, 'as a whole' and takes into consideration the patient's general constitution, lifestyle, occupation, physical and mental health as well as his unique and varying set of symptoms. The approach is individualistic from the point of view that each individual patient is different from others, although suffering from the same disease.

Homeopathy is based on the law of similars. It means that a remedy which creates symptoms and conditions in a healthy person will cure a sick person manifesting similar symptoms. This can be summed up in the dictum: Similia similibus currentur. **In essence, homeopathy treats the patient, not the disease.**

The homeopathic system of medicine has been successful in treating conditions such as psychosomatic disorders, auto-immune diseases, paediatric disorders, ailments during pregnancy, obstinate skin diseases, lifestyle disorders, allergies and more.

### Help for children and elderly people

A popular misconception about homeopathy is that a homeopathic physician does not require clinical facilities such as X-ray, ECG, USG or pathology and bacteriology laboratory investigations. These facilities help with the diagnosis of a disease and although a homeopathic remedy does not entirely depend on diagnosis, it is important to a homeopath in establishing the prognosis of a patient as well as the course of therapeutic intervention and care for the patient.

The remote location of the Centre means that children, women and elderly patients struggle to attend but even so, the Centre provides a vital service to the local community. Every week, 150-200 patients are treated at Bhisindipur Health Centre. <

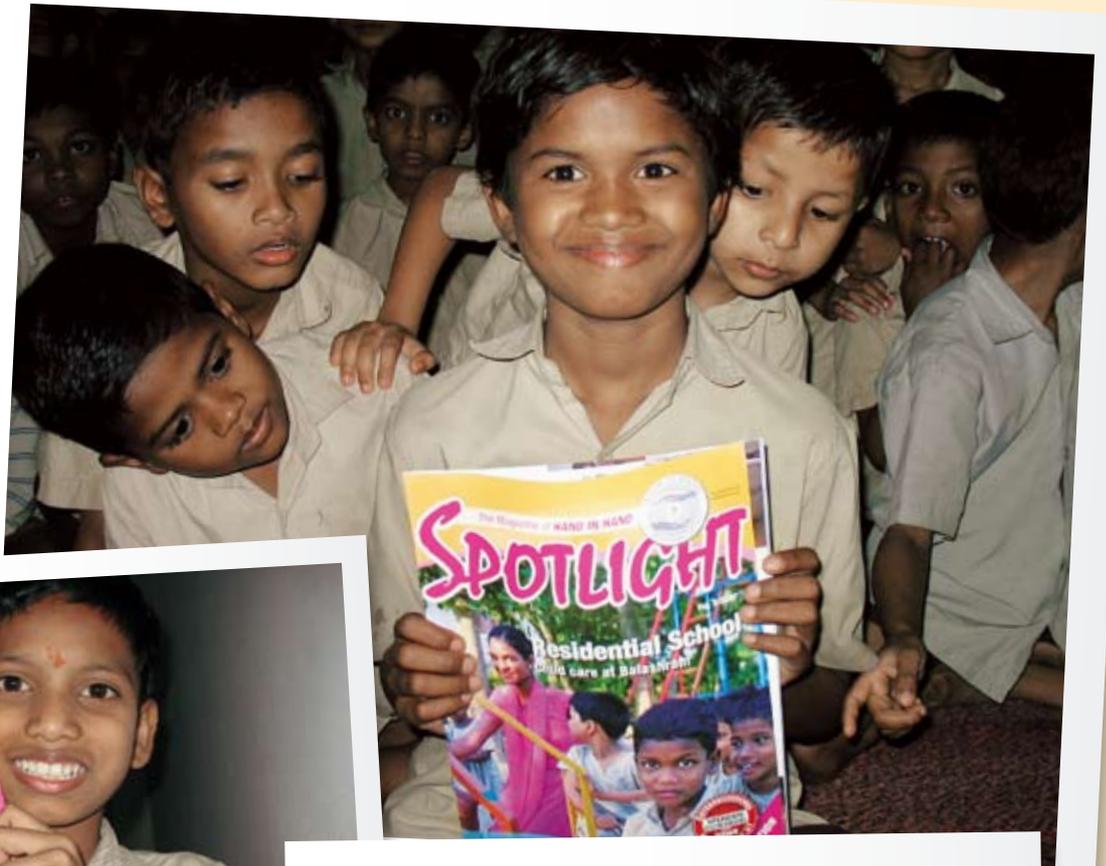
### HEALTH CENTRE BHISINDIPUR

#### Treatment Times

Thursday: 8:30 am–2:00 pm and 3:00 pm–6:30 pm  
Sunday: 8:30 am–2:00 pm



\*Hariharananda Charitable Health Centre



STUDENTS OF BALAJHRAM SCHOOL ENJOY THE SPOTLIGHT AND HAPPILY SHOW OFF THEIR FIRST MAGAZINE!



THANKYOU!

Since 2003 HAND IN HAND carries the Austrian Donation Certificate, which approves the lawful, legitimate and appropriate use of donations.

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